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"What's that? Yuh say he's gone West?
Wus yer buddy since yuh came?
Come on, kid, quit the mopin',
We all gotta do the same.

"He's dead? Aw, don't believe it!
No soldier's ever dead;
He's went an' got promoted
To the forces up ahead—

"Gone up with reinforcements
Where a million armies trod;
An' the Huns of Hell is runnin'
From the soundin' guns of God!"

—Zebulun L. Macmillan, '29

MELANCHOLY EFFLUVIA OF AN OPTIMISTIC CYNIC

Of Education—We must not praise our educational systems too highly when one can find every day supposedly educated people who are so immature and uninformed that they are baffled completely by the hoary problem: Which came first, the hen or the egg? And what is worse these people put away the problem, repeating (in what they consider a highly reverent and commendable manner) Valeat numen Jehovae!

Of Virtue—It is very generally true that, among the sensual, gross, yet highly respectable men who comprise such a large portion of what Mark Twain lovingly called "the damned human race," the following definition of virtue holds: Virtue is a disappointed state of mind that arises in the absence of temptation.

Of Innovations—We know that there was much alarm in the ranks of the orthodox when Jesus preached his heretical doctrines. We also know that Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and Knox did not excite a particularly Christian reaction among the self-termed Christians of their era. And we need go back a few years in the history of our own United States to see really noble and conscientious men damned to the most expensive and effective tortures of the 19th Century Hell by self-righteous bigots masquerading as lieutenants of the Christ. None of these agitators for reform, we may add, were unusually vicious, immoral, or detrimental to the best interests of society, as all now know. Yet, in the light of all this accumulated human experience, consider whether mankind has changed in 2,000 years a few minutes after you have tried to talk sanely and decently about religion with the average respectable citizen of our somewhat United States. May we not well doubt the "thoughts of men are widened by the setting of the suns."

Of Prostitution—The prostitution of the truth is equally revolting and wrath-inspiring as the prostitution of the body—to a person with a discriminating code of morals.

Of Frangibility—Concede, as we must, that few can be sincerely critical in casting stones of contempt and scorn—for the obvious reason that few are without sin—and we still do not obviate the crying need for a volley of stones to shatter all of our glass houses of social, political, and economic imperfection. For all of us live, in some way or another, in very brittle and very transparent houses of glass.

Of Human Love—A sincere misanthropist must be a philanthropist in a sense. Me must love all who hate mankind.

—Pnietzsche.

Blue sky shades into purple dusk,
The orange fires in the west die down.
The reds and golds of the setting sun
Touch softly the fluffy clouds and are gone
Searching through the dusk for new fields to paint
Following over the hills the retreating day.

The soft new green of the willows shines brighter,
Bright green shadows on the murmuring stream.
There are long blue shadows behind the hedge
And a softer murmur behind the lilacs
Where two figures in white dimity are gathering daffodils.

Wavering columns of light blue wood smoke
Rise from trim old red brick chimneys—
Rise and mingle with the gathering dusk—
Blue smoke against the purple sky.

The stars are beginning to show themselves,
Small bright lanterns of the night
Shown against a low dark tapestry.

The subtle perfumes of the flowers and earth
Are far sweeter than the incense of Araby.

Sweet silence pervades the still night.

—Porter K. Bennett, '28.

BY ACCIDENT

The fire was dead. Nothing but white ashes. The crackle of a turning page perturbed the silence of the room. The two roommates sat opposite each other, one studied, other turned pages. The one who turned pages did it slowly, mechanically, very studiously.

He was seeing thru the print. The pile of chips grew larger and larger. Always on the other side of the table. Again and again the thin white hand of Marxton drew in the heap. Broke. Four hundred and twenty dollars in debt. Four-hundred-and-twenty dollars in debt. And his head ached so. Dull heavy pain,—Nausea. Debt. Drunk. Debt. Drunk. Dead drunk. Dead. Death. Death, release, sleep, sleep—no more debts, no more drunkenness. Escape. —Escape.

But this work, here before him, must be done. Why? What's the use? Why work? Why ever go to the class again? Why ever go to any class again? Why ever go to any class again? End it all. The roof,—South is high, quite high enough. But—but every one would know. They'd say, "He committed suic—." What an ugly word. . . . It rasps so. Suicide, a repulsive word. But they mustn't know. The camera. . . . Up there to take pictures, tomorrow morning, second hour, fall over—by accident. One more exposure in the camera—that would fool them. Fell over by accident. No one would ever know, they'd all think it was an accident.

They'd come rushing out of the north end of South. All gather around. Just a heap. Dark red blood mixed with bright red shale. It would gurgle and spurt as it came from the spot where his neck bone had broken thru. And they would be afraid in the face of death. They'd see the camera then, and one would say, "He must have fallen—by accident." They would take the body to a first floor room, and call the doctor, and the bursar, and the dean. And they'd all come, and shake their heads, "by accident." And when the reporter came to get the story for the press, they'd say again, "—by accident." Always, by accident.

Then they'd take the body home. All the familiar friends in the little town would come. The little town like Clinton, but up in the old north hills. And from the other side of the village she would come. Her eyes would be no longer bright. Would she stand so straight, with the hot, heavy, smell of lillies all about? Would she wear the blue dress, or the yellow one? And all around her, every one would say, "—by accident He fell—at college—by accident." They would all be sure, very sure of that.

She would come to the side of the casket, and look at him. They would have turned the head, his head, so that the spot on his neck where the break had come wouldn't show. His beard, tho freshly shaven for the funeral, would show black under the pale whiteness of his skin. It would not be a pleasant sight, for he might be purple in spots—blotchy on the hands. She would look at him. She would see thru the closed lids. She would look into the lidded eyes, as she had looked at him their last time together. And she would see—she would see that—that it wasn't an accident. She would know. A coward. She would see that he was a coward. She would look at his lips, twisted that peculiar way, and see that he had been afraid. Afraid to live. Afraid—. Then she would go and sit down and listen while they all said it was an accident—and she would know—that he had been afraid. A coward.

The work, it must be done. Again the pages crackled as they turned.

—Louis C. Jones, '30.

YEARS

I used to have a box of pleasant dreams
And thoughts and fancies for a gloomy day,
Of flowers of spring and autumn's elves at play,
Cool magic rivers fed by fairy streams,
A haunted castle lit by stray moonbeams,
Nymphs dancing there where lonesome lindens sway,
The golden notes of bells chimed far away,
And myriad poppies drinking lotus beams.

But now my box of pictured dreams is lost
The lid is closed to unbelieving eyes;
Experience is gained but at this cost;
Once happy fancies now must seem but lies;
Imagination's bud once bit by frost
Of greedy disillusionment, soon dies.

Chamberlain Ferry, '29.

"LIKE THAT"

"Some day I'm going to be like that, too!" His ten years might have been fifty from the pride in his voice and the stately carriage of the little figure. Almost he seemed like the magnificent captain he admired, who rode past in parade along the crowded London street. His mother smiled; she knew too well her son would never rise to "that." She knew too well life for "the likes of them." It had no fine uniforms or horses, no fine houses, except those to be cleaned; cleaned well, too, for two sons eat a lot, and money goes to the best worker.

The younger son knew better. Did not everything that Alfred said come true? Was he not capable of anything, just like God and Mr. Harris, the policeman? Ah yes, he knew, and he looked at his brother in much the same way as the latter did at the splendid captain.

Trees and night, everywhere. Couldn't really tell if it was more of trees or more of night. Millions of trees, tons of night. It'd be all right if the night wouldn't go away and then come back like that, or if the trees wouldn't fight so much, and why did they all screech and whine? Why did they roar and jump up whenever the night went away? He'd find out; yes sir, they couldn't fool him, he was going back and find out. . . .

"Stay at your post! . . . Damn it, man! . . . He should have known that, it's safer down."

"He's my brother, sir. May I . . ."

"Yes, I'm afraid he's done, though."

"Alf!

"Hello, Bruv. Got me for a minute—shock, I guess—I'm through—was a damn fool . . . shock, I guess, Bruv . . .say—good-bye—to . . . ."

"Gawd, wot a job! 'E ain't more 'n 'alf left, no 'ow!"

"This one's easier, by the tree here."

"Orl right, Bruv. Hit don't make no difference w'ich one, hi guess, but wot a job, wot a job!"

Again the crowded London street,; again a magnificent parade. The Unknown Soldier, coming to Whitehall.

Never before was such an honour to one man. The splendid captain was his vassal, the great of the Empire bared their heads before him, the King himself saluted. And, as the bugles cut the silence, a certain corporal stood very rigidly at attention, and an old char-woman leaned from a window.

He was "like that," now.

—Zebulun L. Macmillan, '29.

TO M—
A VISION

There she is, that elusive shadow;
There! there! just out my casement window—
I reach and strain, in vain to touch her,
But she evades with airy laughter.

Vested in fairy raiment white,
Tears that shine in eyes so bright,
Glist'ning in the pale moonlight
  She beckons ever onward,
  Drawing me ever forward
    Still eluding me.

I faint! I fail! naught can save me
  From this fair, sweet vision;
Naught can save me, save when the sun
From his dewy couch has risen.

* * *

Slowly my deaden'd senses revive,
But still she's there with the floating hair;
Silver laughter wafts so clear
Out upon the midnight air
I gaze intent, and shed a tear
  Of sorrow and of longing.

Then with despairing cry;
With many a heart-broken sigh
I leap from the casement, and I die;
  While she, with wanton mockery:
    "He loved and died for me."

—S. M. Donaldson, '28.

STARS

I lay upon my back beneath the stars;
Night, cloudless, soft, and sweet,
About my body fell, and, like a kingly robe of silk,
Caressed me, lulled my cares.
I saw the grandeur and the majesty of space,
The planets and the mystic, fiery orbs
That saw this speck we call our world
Take shape, and watched the rise and fall
Of empires strong, whose might failed as a flower droops.

And then I spoke, as if in prayer:
"Oh stars, ye see these men come into life,
Grow up, and go about their little tasks,
Complaining of their lot,
And then fall like the grain before the scythe,
To crumble into dust—
But yet ye live.
What are these foolish creatures we call men,
Who stumble blindly on
And drop?
Stars, keep me from their petty strife;
Let me be like you and look down
On men and on this world's unceasing cares;
O, let me dwell afar in space
And see myself a speck on earth,
An humble creature in this mighty universe!"

—Paul V. Combs, '29.

TO H. B. W.

When the door of life has closed,
And the birds have sung their song,
And the trees have ceased their whispering,
And there is no right nor wrong;
When the perfumes of earth are scentless,
And the waters roll on no more,
And the sun has died in the Heavens,
And the sea has ceased to roar;
When the heart has stilled its longing,
And the eye can no longer see,
And the unknown life in somewhere,
Has become a reality;
Take then this dust of creation,
And purge it with earthly fire,
And throw to the winds of the Heavens,
The remnants of the pyre.
For then I'll be near her always,
When of the world I am a part,
And an anodyne of companionship,
Will sooth my aching heart.
And if there's a city of souls and angels,
I'll woo her in future years
And win, for we have been promised
There are no troubles and tears.
If not, I, as part of creation,
Will hold her close to my heart,
And whisper for eternal ages,
The love I cannot impart.

—E. P. Clark, '28.

COLLEGE

College,
Brightly lighted fraternity houses,
Gay laughter from merry couples
Whirling to mad, barbaric music,
Joyous, irresponsible time of youth—
So they say.

College,
The intellectual aristocracy,
Keen minds searching for truth,
High-hearted, eager young men,
Traveling the high road to knowledge—
Perhaps.

College,
Rush, rush, rush,
Lecture, recitation, quiz,
Endless cramming of isolated facts.
Down stubborn young throats—
This it is.

—Vernon A. Ives, '30.

BORIS STEFANOVITCH

(Europe these days is full of people who have gone through experiences as thrilling, as fantastic, as terrible as anything ever devised by a concocter of fiction. I met one of these people in Belgrade this summer, and in one way or another, I learned his story. Here is the story; believe it or not, it is true, at least in all the essentials.)

In St. Petersburg some twenty years ago lived a prosperous family of a class on that vague borderline which separates the bottom of the nobility from the top of the bourgeoisie. It must have been a family of education and culture, for little Boris had been trained to speak English and French almost as soon as he began to lisp his native Russian. It was a happy family, from all accounts, and favored, for in time little Boris became a fine young man, and received a commission in the navy of his Majesty the Tsar. Stirring times were at hand. The Tsar's little protege, Servia, was in distress. The Tsar mobilized his forces; so did the Kaiser. War came, and for a while Boris was very busy. Then dreadful rumors began to fill the air; there were signs of discontent in the land. The armies that had streamed so irresistibly into Prussia, into Austria, wavered, broke, and fled headlong before the smaller armies of the enemy. There was talk of disloyalty in high places. Discontent was giving way to worse things. The dark year 1917 rolled around, and it brought the Revolution! And the Revolution brought the Terror!

But Boris was at sea when the storm broke. To his father's house came Revolutionists. "You aristocrats! Come!" All his family were led away to prison ,tried, sentenced . . . "Deport the aristocrats!" They were put in a small ship with a number of their friends. The first night out in the cold Baltic the ship sank. All the crew were saved, but none of the aristocrats. . . .

Boris came home. "My people?"—"Murdered!" His mind left him, and that was a mercy, for he was put in prison and cared for, while his comrades were shot. For several years he was mad thus. From time to time they moved him.

It was in far-off, ice-bound Siberia, in a little village called Rybinsk. Boris had been ill, but now he was better. He had been made to do manual labor until his strength, like his wits was gone, and then he had been allowed to rest. Today he was lying on a bench in a tiny log cabin in the prison settlement. An old peasant woman, bent and wrinkled, brought him hot broth. She found him sleeping fitfully. "Awake," she said, "here is your broth."

He opened his eyes; he stared. Across his sallow, emaciated face flitted sudden terror, amazement, wonder. "Why . . . what is this!" he cried. "I . . . I do not understand."

"Ha!" exclaimed the old woman, amazed, as he was. "You look so strange, madman. Don't you recognize me? What is the matter with you today?"

He raised himself on one elbow, and rubbed his forehead with his hand as one does who awakes after a nightmare. "I do not understand . . ." he repeated.

And the old woman knew that he was no longer mad; just how she was so sure it would have been hard to say. "You have been mad a long time," she said. If they learn that you are not mad now, they will kill you."

Boris thought of the news that had greeted his homecoming so long ago—it was long ago, wasn't it? Hadn't the old woman said so? He groaned and closed his eyes. "I don't care if they do," he said.

"That is foolish," said the old woman. She set the broth down on a rough board table near his bed. For a while only their breathing could be heard. There came a crunching on the snow outside; a heavy hand was laid on the door.

"Sleep!" hissed the woman. "You are still sick, remember!"

The door opened, and a soldier stepped into the room. "Well, and how is your madman today, 'Trushka?" he demanded gruffly.

"But little better, Captain," she replied obsequiously. "See, he has not drunk his broth."

"Well," said the soldier good naturedly, (for he was not a captain, but only a sergeant,) "Tell him to hurry up. The warm weather will soon be here. We'll have a use for him then, little use as he is."

"Why do you take my part?" asked Boris, when the soldier had gone.

"I like your face," the peasant woman answered, and went out.

Boris then hungrily drank the broth.

Boris was no longer mad, but he still pretended to be. He continued to be ill, while, with the aid of the old peasant woman, he got into communication with friends outside. Gradually his strength came back. Impatiently he awaited a suitable opportunity. It came one night when the soldiers were celebrating uproariously the arrival of a new commandant. The other prisoners in the post were still carefully guarded, it is true, but poor mad Boris was so harmless anyway, they simply forgot all about him.

It had snowed a little during the day, but at dusk it cleared, and soon the stars came out and danced gleefully in the high dome of heaven, and laughed at the still, white plain of earth. There was no moon. In Rybinsk that night the silence of the wilderness was ruthlessly shattered by the noise of carousing men. Only the stars saw a fur-muffled figure glide out of a little cabin on the outskirts of the village, and noiselessly make his way to the commandant's stable. The drunken sentry was no hindrance. Swiftly Boris harnessed the commandant's horses to the sleigh; carefully he wrapped himself in fur rugs and made himself comfortable. The new-fallen snow deadened all sound as horses and sleigh darted suddenly into the street and away to southward.

All night the sleigh sped over the endless white desert. Occasional distant howlings of wolves only made the good horses fly faster. Then as ghastly gray began to spread up over the eastern horizon, and dim the stars, Boris drew up before a peasant cabin under a bank by a frozen river, and was taken in. It was still daylight when he set forth again, for he knew that pursuit must be almost upon him. Down the wind-swept, frozen river he dashed, leaving no tracks that could be followed. He was grateful that more snow was gently falling, for then they could not track him to the home of the peasant who had succored him. And so he came safely to Omsk, where the railroad was.

Omsk is the junction where the Transsiberian Railroad divides, one branch for Moscow and the other for Leningrad, the St. Petersburg of Boris' boyhood. The Black Sea was the nearest refuge, but he knew the Baltic better. Which way? He had relatives in Ekaterinsburg, the first city outside of Siberia on the way to Leningrad, and thither he made his way. He stayed there some time ,and then, having decided to try for the south, he continued his perilous way across Russia to Samara on the Volga. There the authorities soon became suspicious, and Boris went into hiding. It had been his intention to take a Volga steamer down the river to safety, but the Volga had started to freeze over before he received money from friends to go on. A hundred miles down the river, however, he could get into another province where the police would not have him under such close surveillance. Fugitives learn patience. He waited.

He waited until he thought the ice would bear weight, and then one night in a hired sleigh he started. But he had delayed just a little too long. The police had discovered who he was. The same night that he set out, word was sent to all the villages down the river to seize him, and horsemen came after him from Samara also.

Boris had good horses. Like the north wind he flew. The night was dark no stars twinkled merrily on this night dash. Toward dawn he heard horses behind him. Madly he whipped his own tired beasts, and they leaped forward.

But it was not yet deep winter. The river ice was weak. The night was not cold; indeed the day before rain had fallen. A sudden ripping noise, loud and sharp, made the fugitive's hair crisp with horror. There was another noise like the crack of a rifle, a quick succession of them, a groaning, a crashing. The ice gave way. The cold, black water closed over his head.

Should a man come safely so far, and then fail without a struggle? In his heavy clothes he fought to get out on the solid ice, but the edges broke down continually under his weight. And the staccato beating of hoofs came ringing through the night. A hundred feet away he could make out the black skeletons of bushes silhouetted against the gray ice. A little island was there. Toward it he bent his struggles. Nearer came the hoof-beats . . . He touched bottom. The task was easier now. He reached the thicket. The islet—it was merely a long, narrow spit—was covered by water running ankle deep over the ice. He crouched in the shelter of the bushes, the icy water swirling about his feet, his whole body numb with cold. He was nearly dead.

The horsemen came into view; they saw the great, gaping, black hole in the ice, and the poor horses still frantically fighting to escape; they saw the upturned bottom of the sleigh; but the object of their pursuit they did not see.

"That poor devil's done for," they said, and, cautiously skirting the gap at a safe distance, they rode off to the nearest village to report.

The clouds cleared away; the stars came out; a wan moon lighted up the pale waste of ice and snow with a ghastly radiance. The runaway dared not move away from his shelter. A

black figure moving on the ice would be all too visible to any watcher.

It grew colder. A biting wind from the Siberia he had striven so to leave behind him froze his wet garments till they were like a casing of steal about his body. The water rippling around his feet—feet too numb and dead to care—froze, slowly . . . He wanted so to sleep . . . But he must not, he must not. Over and over again he told himself that he must not sleep. The East was graying. The moon set. The stars went out, one by one. He must not sleep . . . must not sleep . . .

Men chopped his feet out of the ice; men carried him to a village near at hand . . . What was the matter with his feet? He would never have thought such torture possible . . . He hardly had a glimmering of what went on about him till he found himself before the commissar at Saratov.

"And you are Boris Stefanovitch of Leningrad, escaped from Siberia? And mad?" Boris stared at the uncouth man behind the desk with his untidy Russian blouse, his shaven head, his fat neck, his piggy eyes; stupidly he stared at the commissar. Somebody said, "Yes, he is."

"As to who he is, he answers the description. As to being mad . . . he must be. Only a poor mad devil would have been found like him . . ."

"Frozen in the ice he was. His horses . . ."

"His horses were stolen. You are a thief as well as an aristocrat, Boris Stefanovitch."

What was the sense of all this talk? He was caught. Why did they not finish their job? Why did they not shoot him? It would be much better. His feet . . . could they be his feet?

Months he was in prison in Saratov. He contracted pneumonia. Why he did not die outright was a mystery to himself and to the prison doctor alike. But the thought occurred to him that it would be a sin to die now, after coming so far. Men do not die when they can live. He must win his battle for freedom. And so, as he grew better, his resolve to succeed grew stronger. He was young yet. Life was all before him. . . .

How did he escape this time? He must have won the hearts of his attendants too well. He was indeed a charming fellow, and mad, too, poor chap. Whether he was mad or just by pretence it would have been hard to say. Perhaps he was both. He could hardly have said himself. The authorities had been warned to watch him closely—had been told how he escaped before. But he was so pleasant and so harmless now. Why, no man could have walked on those feet of his anyway. A silly nurse was fooled; keys were obtained; the vast Russian plain swallowed him.

Somehow he eluded his pursuers, and in due course reached Sebastopol, a poor, thin wreck of a man, lame, weak, starving. But Sebastopol was on the sea, and Boris was a sailor. And Constantinople was just across the way. It was easy to stow away on a ship . . . But when the ship sailed, not to Constantinople, but to Odessa, and he was delivered up there in chains for stealing passage, that was heart-rending. He lost two fingers from his right hand fighting his way to freedom there. He had to escape before he was identified as something worse than a stowaway.

He boarded a Roumanian vessel in the night from a skiff after she was under way. He told his true story to the captain. The perfect French he spoke, his refined countenance belied his rags and his hardship-wracked body, and helped prove him the gentleman he claimed to be; the captain believed at least enough to be kind; and today Boris Stefanovitch is a free man.

—Frederic D. H. Gilbert, 28

Breathe into me thy soul, thou some inspiring spirit,
Teach me thy voice to know,
Teach me thy call, to hear it,
And when I hear—
O tell me not 'tis witless pride hath poured me a cup
for others meant,
O tell me not I seek in vain to drink where others
shall be sent,
But when I fear—
Bid me to hope.

—Polyphemus.